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ABSTRACT

This study of gender differences in the sport socialization process of high school varsity athletes examined: (1) the primary and secondary patterns of sport involvement by significant others; and (2) the primary sources of motivation for athletes' entrance into sport and continued sport involvement. A 96-item Sport Participation Inventory was administered to 119 male and 75 female varsity athletes representing 12 varsity sports. Results revealed that: (1) more females than males reported that their sisters participated in sports and were sport fans; (2) more males than females reported that their friends frequently participated in recreational physical activities during childhood and that their parents provided the most motivation to begin participation in sport; (3) females reported that they were primarily self-motivated in sport participation; and (4) both males and females reported that they were primarily self-motivated to continue sport participation. There were no gender differences in the sources of motivation for continued sport involvement. (JD)

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE SPORT SOCIALIZATION PROCESS OF HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY ATHLETES. Linda Lander and Carol L. Durentini, Bowling Green State University.

The purpose of the study was to determine gender differences in the sport socialization process of high school varsity athletes. The study examined: 1) the primary and secondary patterns of sport involvement by significant others; and 2) the primary sources of motivation for entrance into sport and continued sport involvement. A 96 item Sport Participation Questionnaire was administered to male (n=119) and female (n=75) high school varsity athletes. Selected questionnaire items were analyzed with chi-square. Results indicated that there were gender differences in the reported participation of sisters in recreational physical activities. More females (45%) than males (21%) reported that their sisters frequently participated in physical activities during childhood. More females (35%) than males (17%) reported that their sisters currently participate in physical activities on a frequent basis. Gender differences were also found in the reported childhood participation of friends in physical activities. More males (72%) than females (54%) reported that their friends participated daily. Differences were found in the perceived degree of direct sport involvement of sisters with the athlete. More females (27%) than males (7%) reported that their sisters frequently participated in sports with them. Gender differences also existed in the degree of secondary sport involvement of sisters and friends. More females (29%) than males (19%) reported that their sisters were 'highly interested' or 'avid fans.' There was a difference in the role of socializing agents in providing the primary motivation for athletes' entrance into sport. Females (41%) reported that they were self-motivated to begin participation; males (33%) reported that their parents provided the primary motivation to enter sport. There were no gender differences in the role of socializing agents in providing the primary motivation to continue sport involvement. Females (34%) and males (32%) reported that they were primarily self-motivated to continue. Parents and friends, respectively, were the second and third most frequently cited sources of motivation for athletes' continued sport involvement. In summary, there are gender differences in: 1) the primary and secondary patterns of sport involvement of athletes' sisters and friends; and 2) the primary source of motivation for athletes' entrance into sport. There are no gender differences in the sources of motivation for continued sport involvement.

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## Introduction

Kenyon and McPherson (1973) identified three categories of variables in the sport socialization process: 1) personal attributes of the individual, 2) significant others, and 3) socializing situations. Research has indicated that sport socialization may vary by gender (Greendorfer, 1977; Greendorfer & Ewing. 1981) and lifecycle (Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978).

This study examined gender differences in the sport socialization process of high school varsity athletes. Specifically, the study examined: 1) the primary and secondary patterns of sport involvement by significant others, and 2) the primary sources of motivation for athletes' entrance into sport and continued sport involvement.

## Procedures

A 96-item Sport Participation Inventory (Durentini & Lander, 1985) was administered to 119 male and 75 female varsity athletes representing 12 varsity sports. The athletes were enrolled in four public high schools in urban and suburban areas of northwest Ohio. Selected inventory items were analyzed with chi-square.

## Results

### Primary Involvement by Significant Others

Significantly ($p=.013$) more females than males reported that their sisters frequently participated in recreational physical activities during the athletes' childhood (see Table 1).

Significantly ($p=.040$) more females than males reported that their sisters currently participate in recreational physical activities (see Table 2).

Significantly (p=.004) more females than males reported that their sisters frequently participated in sports with them (see Table 3).

Significantly (p=.007) more males than females reported that their friends frequently participated in recreational physical activities during the athletes childhood (see Table 4).

Secondary Involvement by Significant Others

Significantly (p=.039) more female athletes than male athletes reported that their sisters were "highly interested" or "avid" sport fans (see Table 5).

Sources of Motivation

Gender differences existed in the sources of motivation for entrance into continued sport involvement. There was a significant (p=.028) difference between genders in the sources of motivation to begin participation in the primary varsity sport. Females (41%) reported that they were self-motivated to begin participation, whereas males (33%) reported that they were primarily motivated by their parents to enter sport (see Tables 6 & 7).

There was no significant differences in the sources of motivation for continued sport involvement. Both females (34%) and males (32%) reported that they were self-motivated to continue participation in their primary varsity sport (see Table 8). Parents and friends, respectively, were the second and third most frequently cited sources of motivation for continued sport involvement (see Table 9).

## Summary of Results

1. The primary and secondary patterns of sport involvement of athletes' sisters and friends varies according to gender.
   a. More females than males reported that their sisters participated in sports.
   b. More females than males reported that their sisters were "highly interested" or "avid" fans.
   c. More males than females reported that their friends frequently participated in recreational physical activities during childhood.
2. There are gender differences in the sources of motivation for athletes' entrance into sport.
   a. Males reported that parents provided the most motivation to begin participation in sport.
   b. Females reported that they were primarily self-motivated to begin sport participation.
3. There are no gender differences in the sources of motivation for continued sport involvement. Both males and females reported that they were primarily self-motivated to continue sport participation.

## Conclusions

The sport socialization process of adolescent varsity athletes varies by gender and stage of sport involvement. Parents provided male athletes with the most motivation to enter sport, whereas females were primarily self-motivated to begin. Both males and females indicated that they were primarily self-motivated to continue sport involvement.

Table 1

Frequency of Sisters' Participation in Recreational Physical Activities During Athlete's Childhood (age 6-12)

| | Never | Once a Month | 2/4 times a Month | 2/3 times a Week | Daily |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 51.69% | 15.25% | 11.86% | 11.02% | 10.17% |
| Female | 35.62% | 9.59% | 9.59% | 20.55% | 24.66% |

$df = 4$
$X^2 = 12.70$
$p = .013$

Table 2

Frequency of Sisters' Current Participation in Recreational Physical Activities

| | Never | Once a Month | 2/4 times a Month | 2/3 times a Week | Daily |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 61.02% | 11.02% | 11.02% | 10.17% | 6.78% |
| Female | 41.67% | 8.33% | 15.28% | 20.83% | 13.89% |

$df = 4$
$X^2 = 10.05$
$p = .040$

Table 3

Frequency of Sisters' Primary Sport Involvement with Athlete

| | Never | Once a Month | 2/4 times a Month | 2/3 times a Week | Daily |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 61.54% | 17.95% | 13.68% | 4.27% | 2.56% |
| Female | 45.07% | 14.08% | 14.08% | 11.27% | 15.49% |

$df = 4$
$X^2 = 15.62$
$p = .004$

Table 4

Frequency of Friends' Participation in Recreational Activities During Athletes' Childhood (ages 6-12)

| | Never | Once a Month | 2/4 times a Month | 2/3 times a Week | Daily |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 5.04% | 6.72% | 9.24% | 6.72% | 72.27% |
| Female | 4.05% | 6.76% | 9.46% | 25.68% | 54.05% |

$df = 4$
$X^2 = 14.13$
$p = .007$

Table 5

Degree of Sisters' Secondary Sport Involvement

| | Totally Uninterested | A Little Interested | Moderately Interested | Highly Interested | An Avid Fan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 29.91% | 27.35% | 23.93% | 7.69% | 11.11% |
| Female | 28.99% | 20.29% | 21.74% | 23.19% | 5.80% |

df = 4
$X^2$ = 10.07
p = .039

Table 6

Primary Sources of Motivation for
Athletes' Entrance Into Sport

| | Father/ Mother | Brother/ Sister | Friend | Teacher/ Coach | Yourself |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 33.05% | 12.71% | 26.27% | 9.32% | 18.64% |
| Female | 23.19% | 10.14% | 20.29% | 5.80% | 40.58% |

$df = 4$
$X^2 = 10.84$
$p = .028$

Table 7

Rank Order of Significant Others' Influence on Athletes' Entrance Into Sport

| | Male | | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Parents | 33% | 1. | Self | 41% |
| 2. | Peers | 26% | 2. | Parent | 23% |
| 3. | Self | 19% | 3. | Peers | 20% |
| 4. | Siblings | 13% | 4. | Siblings | 10% |
| 5. | Teacher/Coach | 9% | 5. | Teacher/Coach | 6% |

Table 8

Primary Sources of Motivation for
Athletes' Continued Sport Involvement

| | Father/ Mother | Brother/ Sister | Friend | Teacher/ Coach | Yourself |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 25.21% | 9.24% | 20.17% | 13.45% | 31.93% |
| Female | 26.47% | 2.94% | 19.12% | 17.65% | 33.82% |

df = 4
$X^2$ = 3.08
p = .544

Table 9

Rank Order of Significant Others' Influence on Athletes' Continued Sport Involvement

| Male | | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Parents | 32% | 1. Self | 34% |
| 2. Peers | 25% | 2. Parent | 26% |
| 3. Self | 20% | 3. Peers | 19% |
| 4. Siblings | 14% | 4. Siblings | 18% |
| 5. Teacher/Coach | 9% | 5. Teacher/Coach | 3% |